



MAY 2009

FSA Columbus Service Center News

Serving Burlington, Camden, Ocean Counties

USDA
Burlington/Camden
Ocean Counties in NJ

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www.fsa.usda.gov/nj

Hours
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee

George H Adams Sr
Marilyn L Russo
Louis Parzanese
John H Hunter
Ralph Wainwright

County Committee meets
2nd Tuesday of Month

Office Staff

Nick Morolda
County Executive Director
Robert Maxwell
Farm Loan Manager
Ellen Schmidt
Farm Loan Officer
Program Technicians:
Julia Coriaty
Jim Mellor
Craig Christo

Request for Soybean Referendum May 4 – May 29

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced that it will offer soybean producers the opportunity to request a referendum on the Soybean Promotion and Research Order, as authorized under the Soybean Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act.

The Request for Referendum will be conducted at county Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices. To participate, producers must certify and provide documentation that shows that they produced soybeans and paid an assessment on the soybeans during the period of Jan. 1, 2007, through Dec. 31, 2008.

Beginning May 4, 2009, and continuing through May 29, 2009, producers may obtain a request form by mail, fax, or in person from the FSA county offices. Forms may also be obtained via the internet at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsmarketingprograms> during the same time period.

The deadline for returning the referendum request form is May 29, 2009. USDA will conduct a referendum if at least 10 percent of the nation's 589,182 soybean producers support a referendum. Not more than one-fifth of the producers who support having a referendum can be from any one state. For more information, contact your local FSA office.

DCP & ACRE Signup Extended

Signup for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) Program has been extended until August 14, 2009. FSA will not accept any late-filed applications. Signup in the ACRE option is also available through August 14, 2009.

FSA computes DCP Program payments using base acres and payment yields established for each farm. Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regard-

less of market prices. For 2009, you may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. FSA will issue advance direct payments later this month. Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

The electronic DCP (or eDCP) service will save you time, reduce paperwork and speed up contract processing at FSA offices. It is available to anyone eligible to participate in the DCP Program. To access this on-line service, you must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov> followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

ACRE Signup is Ongoing

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program signup began April 27, 2009, and runs through August 14, 2009. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

The ACRE program was created to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.





New Commodity Loan Repayment Rates

Since April 15, FSA began using an improved and more stable system for determining non-recourse marketing assistance loan repayment rates and loan deficiency payment rates for wheat, feed grains, pulse crops, oilseeds, wool, mohair and honey.

The new method reduces the effects daily market volatilities have on loan repayment rates, and provides more certainty for producers who have taken advantage of marketing assistance loans or loan deficiency payments.

The loan repayment rate may now be determined as the **lesser** of the loan rate plus interest and a rate based on: 1) average market prices during the previous 30 days, or 2) an alternative method the secretary may develop.

Beginning April 15, 2009, for wheat, corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, barley, oats, canola, flaxseed and sunflower seed, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) determines and publishes daily loan repayment rates based on the average market prices during the preceding 30 days. At the same time, CCC will announce each day a repayment rate based on the preceding five days. The new method will replace the current one, which is based on the previous day's market rates. **The effective alternative repayment rate will be the lower of either the 30-day average or the 5-day average.**

The 30-day method will reflect a 30-day moving average of all terminal market prices for the crop, adjusted by the difference between the applicable national loan rate and the county loan rate. The 5-day method will reflect a 5-day moving average of applicable terminal market prices adjusted by applicable county differential and terminal adjustments.

This new loan repayment method will minimize potential forfeitures, accumulation of CCC stocks, CCC storage costs, market impediments and discrepancies in benefits across state and county boundaries. More details are available at your county FSA office.

Crop Reporting

The annual, timely and accurate reporting of acres for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a variety of Farm Service Agency programs. All cropland on the farm must be reported to receive benefits from the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program, marketing assistance loans and Loan Deficiency Payments.

Conservation Reserve Program acreage must be reported to receive annual rental payments. And, crop acreage for Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) must also be reported.

Crop reports, form FSA-578, Report of Acreage, must account for all cropland on a farm, whether idle or planted. Producers need to file their acreage reports by May 31, 2009 for small grains and July 15, 2009 for all other crops

Prevented Planting:

Prevented planting needs be reported no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date.

Failed Acreage:

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

2009 County Committee Elections

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency county committees is important to ALL farmers and ranchers, whether beginning or long-established, with large or small operations. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers and ranchers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. County committees provide local input on:

- Commodity price support loans and payments
- Conservation programs
- Incentive, indemnity and disaster payments for some commodities
- Emergency programs
- Payment eligibility

FSA county committees operate within official regulations to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

Election Period

June 15, 2009 – The nomination period begins. Request nomination forms (FSA 669A) from the local USDA Service Center or obtain online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

Aug. 3, 2009 - Last day to file nomination forms

Nov. 6, 2009 - Ballots mailed to eligible voters

Dec. 7, 2009 - Last day to return voted ballots to the USDA Service Center

Jan. 1, 2010 - Newly elected county committee members take office

Continue from Page 2 COC Elections

Who Can Hold Office

To hold office a person must meet the basic eligibility criteria.

- Participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA
- Be eligible to vote in a county committee election
- Reside in the LAA in which a candidate

Not have been:

- Removed or disqualified from the office of county committee member, alternate or employee
- Removed for cause from any public office or have been convicted of fraud, larceny, embezzlement or any other felony
- Dishonorably discharged from any branch of the armed services.

Nominations

To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign nomination form FSA-669A. The form includes a statement that the nominee agrees to serve if elected. This form is available at USDA Service Centers and online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA> under News & Events/County Committee Elections.

Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 3, 2009.

Individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Additionally, organizations representing minority and women farmers or ranchers may nominate candidates. Nomination forms are filed for the county committee of the office that administers a producer's farm records.

Who Can Vote

Agricultural producers of legal voting age may be eligible to vote if they participate or cooperate in any FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote. More information about voting eligibility requirements can be found in the FSA fact sheet titled "FSA County Committee Election - Eligibility to Vote and Hold.

Pulse Crops

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 states eligible pulse crop acres may be added as base acres.

The addition of pulse crop base acres is:

- effective for 2009 through 2012 crop years
- required to be calculated in the same manner as eligible oilseed acreage under the 2002 Farm Bill.

The calculation of pulse crop base acres and yield is based on the acreage and yield history from the 1998 through 2001 crop years. Pulse crops are defined as:

- dry peas (green, yellow, Austrian, Umatilla, and wrinkled); intended uses must be Seed or Dry Edible.

- Lentils; any intended use.
 - large chickpeas (Kabuli garbanzo beans); any intended use.
 - small chickpeas (Desi garbanzo beans); any intended use.
- Pulse crop base acres will only be eligible for counter-cyclical or Acreage Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) payments for 2009 through 2012 crop years. Direct payments will not be eligible.

Producers with current pulse crop acre history in 1998 through 2001 will be notified of the opportunity to update pulse crop base acres to their farm using one of three options. Producers must also provide verifiable and acceptable production evidence to support the calculated average farm yield for each pulse crop. The deadline for pulse crop base acres and yield election is August 14, 2009.

Producers that did not file acreage reports on pulse crops in 1998 through 2001, may now provide a late-filed acreage report at no charge. Acceptable evidence of the existence and disposition of the crop is required: Late-file prevented planting provisions for 1998 through 2001 pulse crops also apply.

Measurement Service

Farmers who would like a guarantee on their crop plantings and land use acreages can make it official by using the FSA measurement service. Producers must file a request with the county office staff and pay the cost of a field visit to have stake and referencing done on the farm. Measurement service is available using digital imagery and where an on-site visit is not required are charged at a reduced rate.

Incorrect acreage self-certification can result in reduced program payments, penalty, or loss of eligibility.

Producers can request ortho-imagery and CLU covering their land (commonly referred to as a clip) at no charge. This would provide the acreage of an entire field.

Emergency Loan Deadline

Applications for Emergency Loans due to Secretarial Natural Disaster Determination S2756 approved by the Secretary of Agriculture on 9/17/08 will still be accepted through May 18, 2009. Applications pending on that day may be processed and completed. This disaster declaration was due to losses caused by: 1) High winds, excessive rain, flash floods, and hail: 5/12/08 through 8/10/2008; 2) Drought, high temperatures: beginning 6/10/2008 and continuing throughout the summer of 2008. The counties impacted by this disaster declaration and handled by the Columbus Service Center are Burlington, Camden, Ocean and Gloucester counties in NJ.

ACRE Informational Meetings

The county office will be having informational meetings to discuss the provisions for the new Average Crop Revenue Election program (ACRE). Procedures to elect farms for participation in this program along with any questions you may have will be addressed. Three meeting dates and times have been arranged:

- **May 19, 2009 – 10am**
- **May 20, 2009 – 7am**
- **May 21, 2009 – 2pm**

Dates to Remember	
Continuous	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program
May 4 thru May 29, 2009	Requests for Referendum for Soybean Promotion
May 31, 2009	Last Day to Report Small Grains
June 15, 2009	COC nominations period opens
July 15 2009	Last day to report all other crops
April 27 to August 14, 2009	ACRE program signup runs
Aug. 3, 2009	Last day to file COC election nomination forms
Aug. 14, 2009	DCP&ACRE Signup Deadline
Selected Interest Rates for May 2009	
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.25%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.375
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.25%
Farm Ownership Loans — Down Payment	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loans	2.375

Please contact the office to let us know if you will be attending one of these sessions. All meetings will be held at the Service Center in Columbus. If you cannot attend one of these sessions but would still like information regarding ACRE please contact the office and arrangements can be made. Elections for the ACRE program will be accepted up to August 14 for 2009 and up to June 1 for years 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Additional meetings will be held in the following locations:

- **May 13, 2009 – 7pm at the Woodstown Service Center**
- **May 18, 2009 - 7pm at the Freehold Service Center**
- **May 27, 2009 – 6:30 pm at the Hunterdon Extension Service Bldg.**

If you need assistance arranging to attend one of these meetings please let us know. Persons with disabilities who require accommodations to attend or participate in this meeting/event/function should contact Nick Morolda, on voice phone at 1- 609- 267-1639, TDD# at 1-800-877-8339, and e-mail at nick.morolda@nj.usda.gov by May 11, 2009.

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